



FEMA

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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ENTIRE STATE OF MICHIGAN TO RECEIVE FEDERAL MITIGATION FUNDS

Disaster recovery officials have announced an amendment to the June 30 Presidential declaration which makes federal funds available to the state of Michigan for mitigation projects designed to reduce damage and loss in future severe weather events.

The federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) now available in Michigan is funded with 7.5% of total FEMA dollars disbursed under the original disaster declaration. This program provides an opportunity for the state to take action today to reduce the impact of natural hazards tomorrow.

Residents of Michigan have that same opportunity. Whether repairing or rebuilding in the aftermath of severe storms and flooding, planning new construction or simply renovating, they can make choices now that will put them and their property at much less risk later.

State and federal emergency management agencies have a wealth of expertise and information to inform those choices. The media has the means to make this expertise and information available to the reading/viewing public.

Attached is a release that introduces a number of steps that can be taken to prevent or lessen damage in incidents of high winds and in flooding. In addition, FEMA and MSP/EMD mitigation experts are available to be interviewed on any of these methodologies and/or to provide links to a variety of related sources of information. Print materials are available for distribution to interested parties. Online links to a variety of related topics are numerous.

Any or all of these sources can be made available to you from the East Lansing Disaster Field Office – 1-517-324-3240. You may also call the FEMA regional mitigation office at 1-312-408-5567.



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Now is the Time to Protect Your Home from Future Disasters

Michigan residents who are repairing or rebuilding from recent severe storms are facing many choices – and opportunities – regarding how they put the pieces of their homes and lives back together.

State and federal emergency management officials are hoping that some of those choices will include techniques that can help prevent damage in future severe storms.

“As people repair or rebuild, it’s an ideal time for them to incorporate disaster-resistant measures,” says Marianne C. Jackson, Federal Coordinating Officer for the current disaster recovery effort. “Many of these are small changes that can make a big difference the next time storms strike.”

F/Lt. Ralph J. Hobrat, State Coordinating Officer for the Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division (MSP/EMD) says that similar steps taken after other disasters in Michigan have already proven effective in minimizing subsequent damage.

“We know that disaster-resistance techniques work because we’ve seen examples where damage was reduced or prevented in another disaster,” says Hobrat. “Right now, many Michiganians have a second chance to take those same steps as they rebuild. We hope they’ll consider implementing some of these methods that will better protect their families and homes.”

Officials agree that the best way to minimize damage from severe storms is to consider both flood- and wind-resistant techniques. Many of these measures can be put in place for little or no cost. Some require more of an investment.

Severe storms often cause flooding, and Michigan has seen much of that in the last decade. As a result, officials are urging citizens to take action that will minimize this type of disaster result. Some of those ideas are:

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- **Install a sewer backflow valve** to temporarily block drainpipes and prevent sewage from backing up into the house.
- **Add a sump pump in your basement** to help keep groundwater from entering your home's interior.
- **Elevate key utilities and appliances** – water heaters, furnaces, washers and dryers. When possible, move them from a basement or lower level to an upper floor. Otherwise, relocate appliances on a base at least 6 inches tall. Be sure to use a licensed contractor when plumbing or electrical changes are needed.
- **Raise electrical components** – panel boxes, switches, outlets – at least 1 foot above the 100-year flood level. For help in determining the 100-year flood level in your area, check with local officials.
- **Cut drywall so that it is one-half to 1-inch off the floor**, especially in basements. Concrete floors commonly absorb ground moisture – especially in winter months. That moisture can wick up the wallboard if it's touching the floor, allowing mold to grow out-of-sight within the walls. (You can hide the gap with wood or rubberized floor trim.)
- **Anchor a fuel tank** by securing it to a large concrete slab or by running straps that are attached to ground anchors over the tank.
- **Add waterproof veneer** to exterior walls and seal all openings, including doors, to prevent water entry.
- **Don't forget to buy flood insurance** – even if you don't live in a flood-prone area. Flood insurance provides year-round financial protection and improves your ability to quickly recover when severe storms strike and cause unexpected flooding.

Call your local insurance agent or 1-800-720-1090 to reach National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) specialists.

To minimize damage caused by high winds, emergency management officials suggest the following:

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- **Anchor critical building components** in three areas:
 - **Attach roof rafters to the walls with a metal connector** - most easily added when new roof sheathing and shingles are installed – to help the structure resist wind uplift.
 - **Tie one floor to another with a continuous strap** (nailed on the outside of the wall) or with a floor-tie anchor, nailed to the inside of the wall.
 - **Secure the structure to the foundation with connectors** nailed to the studs and bolted into the concrete – also to help the structure resist wind uplift.
- **Fortify gable roofs** by bracing the end wall of the gable to resist high winds.
- **Take outside measures** to minimize flying debris:
 - Replace landscaping gravel and rock with shredded bark.
 - Keep trees and shrubs trimmed.
 - Cut weak branches and trees that could fall on your house or those around you.
- **Reinforce glass** windows and doors by:
 - Installing impact-resistant laminated glass window or door systems.
 - Applying high-strength window security films to standard window and patio door glass.
- **Fortify garage doors** by:
 - Installing permanent wood or metal stiffeners to an existing door.
 - Replacing door with one that is designed to resist high winds.
- **Build a “safe room”** inside your home to provide shelter from a storm by:
 - Reinforcing an existing room (bathroom, closet or utility room) to withstand uplift, overturning or penetration from flying debris.
 - Building a small, attached addition to your home with proper anchors and reinforcement to resist high winds or tornadoes.

Call 1-800-480-2520 to order your free copy of “Taking Shelter from the Storm”

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On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA’s continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.